

Gardner A. Sage Library
21 Seminary Place, New Brunswick Theological
Seminary
New Brunswick
Middlesex County
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-722

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

GARDNER A. SAGE LIBRARY

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Address: 21 Seminary Place, New Brunswick Theological Seminary, New Brunswick, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Present Owner: New Brunswick Theological Seminary

Present Occupant and Present Use: Library

Brief Statement of Significance: Built in 1875, this large, attractive library is a major work of the important New York architect Detlef Lienau.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Original and subsequent owner: New Brunswick Theological Seminary
2. Date of erection: 1875
3. Architect: Detlef Lienau
4. Notes on alterations and additions: Addition known as Wessels building has completed the original structure by providing two wings and an apse, thus forming a cross.
5. Sources of information: Ellen W. Kramer: The Domestic Architecture of Detlef Lienau, a Conservative Victorian, PhD. dissertation, New York University (1958).
Ellen W. Kramer: "Detlef Lienau, an Architect of the Brown Decades," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, XIV (March, 1955).

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

Detlef Lienau (1818-1887), architect for this building, was born in Holstein, Germany. He was educated at the Royal Architectural College, Munich, 1841-1843. He later studied in Paris under Henri Labrouste. Lienau travelled extensively in France and Italy, and briefly in England, before immigrating to America in 1848. Lienau's practice was very successful in this country. Due to his European training, he attracted many prominent clients, and built various types of structures including homes, and public and commercial buildings.

Prepared by Peter N. VandenBerge, Librarian
Gardner A. Sage Library
New Brunswick Theological Seminary
New Brunswick, New Jersey

Osmund R. Overby, Architect
National Park Service
February 1961

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Handsome and excellently preserved, Basilica-shaped library of the early 1870's.
2. Condition of fabric: Very good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Principal two-story nave--30' x 80'; lower side portions (each side)--10' x 69'. Rectangular in shape with later rear wing, forming a "T". (Wing not included in above measurements.)
2. Foundations: Show as ashlar cut stone.
3. Wall construction: Red "pressed" brick, common bond, thin mortar joints, tannish brown stone quoins at corners.
4. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: Large stone steps to front entrance, splayed at bottom; heavy stone railing of classical inspiration.
5. Chimneys: At rear of original building; now have a stone cap.
6. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: Front entry--Doric entablature in stone with paired half-round Tuscan pilasters on each side, set on paneled podium. Double wood doors, upper panels have been removed and replaced by glass; arch head transom, glazed. "Gardner A. Sage Library" in raised stone capital letters around transom.
 - b. Windows:
 - (1) Front: Second floor over entry--three tall and narrow double-hung wood sash windows with arched heads; stone keystones. Stained glass in sash. Bull's eye window in gable with four stone keystones at top, bottom, and sides.
 - (2) Sides, lower portion (book stacks): Seven tall narrow arch head recesses on each side running from first floor through balcony; within each are two one-light windows, with translucent glass, one at first-floor level with flat arch head, and one at balcony level at top of recess with arch head.

- (3) Clerestory: Seven low arch head windows each side in upper part of central hall over book alcoves; windows divided into three vertical panes, one sash each, translucent glass.
- (4) Basement windows, side: Arch head windows, double-hung wood sash, 1/1 lights, with decorated wrought-iron grilles.
- (5) Rear: Three arch head windows at same height as clerestory windows, each twelve panes, one sash.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Main central portion--gable roof, ridge runs front to back, wood frame, wood king post trusses; side portion has sloping shed roofs, hipped at front and rear. Slate shingles cover both roofs.
- b. Cornice: Simple stone cornice on side portion; no cornice on side of main portion, rafter ends exposed. Front and rear: heavy stone cornice corbeled out at ends, crowned by a stone acroterion-inspired device at top and split half acroteria at sides of building.
- c. Dormers, cupolas: None.

C. Technical Description of Interiors

1. Floor plans:

- a. Central hall: Nave-like rectangular room, two stories high, with card files and reading desks. Balcony around.
- b. Book stacks: Book stacks are in alcoves opening off the central room on both floor and balcony levels. Alcoves are barreled vaulted in masonry, and the ends of the vaulting facing the central room are faced in stone. This stone facing is delicate and decorated with incised acroteria and other motifs. The shelving consists of walnut bookcases on each side of the alcoves, with the ends facing the central nave decorated with paneling and a bull's eye. At the end of each alcove is a window.
- c. Balcony: The floor level alcove juts into the central room to allow for a balcony walkway above providing access to the upper stacks. The walkway extends around all four sides and has a delicate wrought-iron railing and a tile floor.

2. Stairways: Narrow iron stairway around all four sides of square stair hall to balcony and basement; cast and wrought iron structure, risers, treads, newel, and railing, all decorated.
3. Flooring: Handsome floor tiles laid in various geometric patterns. Tiles square, rectangular and triangular in black, tan, and brown.
Structure: Low masonry vaults between iron beams.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Delicate decorated stone facing to book alcoves at floor and balcony levels. Walls plaster. Doric frieze cornice at ceiling. Ceiling in low transverse masonry barrel vaults with decorative plaster mouldings. Each vault contains three decorative plaster coffers.
5. Doorways and doors: Interior doors are walnut with seven sunk panels; double doors to front entrance.
6. Trim: Walnut trim; walnut wainscoting in entry and across front end of central room. Ends of bookcases are paneled walnut.
7. Hardware: Ordinary commercial hardware.
8. Lighting: Modern electric; table lamps and fluorescent strips in book alcoves.
9. Heating: Central; no fireplaces.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: South, facing on college campus.
2. Enclosures: None.
3. Outbuildings: Recent rear wing forms "T" across back.
4. Walks, driveways, etc.: Driveway in front from street serves Seminary buildings.
5. Landscaping, gardens, etc.: Grass, old trees, shrubs.

Prepared by James C. Massey, Architect
National Park Service
February 1960